



# MT. CULMEN CLARION

## A Newsletter of Mt. Culmen EC Church

*"What I tell you in the dark, say in the light;  
and what you hear whispered, shout from the rooftops!"*

**Volume 6 - Issue 8 - August 2023**

**Pastor**

Rev. Jonathan J. Brown  
717-205-6532

**Lay Delegate**

Rebekah Brown

**Alternate Lay Delegate**

Kenneth Bannon

**Board President**

Floyd Mast

**Board Vice President**

Delrea Ream

**Board Secretary**

Sharon Mast

**Church Treasurer**

Esther Stauffer

**Trustees:**

Floyd Mast  
Barry Ream  
David Rissler  
Ian Pammer

**Stewards:**

Esther Stauffer  
Joyce Garber  
Kim Sweigart  
Brenna Pammer

**Members-at-Large:**

Sharon Mast  
Delrea Ream



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### Not Too Small a Thing; or, Censored Censers

— Rev. Jonathan Brown

In our ongoing study of the Book of Numbers, last month we finally worked through a truly devastating patch. Reaching the borders of the promised land, scouts had gone in to scout it out; but on their return, their fear-based perspective whipped all Israel into a panic, whereby they tried to vote Moses out of office and beat a retreat to Egypt. Now, by the end of chapter 15, God has dealt with the direct fall-out of their faithless rejection of his promise. God has consigned them to the desert for a generation, true, but God has also commanded them to each wear some priestly blue cords in their garments' tassels so that, whether they're tempted again to "*scout out*" what their mere eyes perceive, the vision of their eyes can look at these tassels and, seeing that priestly blue, remind them of who they are (Numbers 15:39). After all, if they're faithful to what that blue means, then they're "*a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*" (Exodus 19:6), and so "*remember and do all my commandments, and be holy to your God*" (Numbers 15:40).

And that brings us into a new big unit (Numbers 16-19), which is going to pick up that idea and show us right and wrong ways to use it. Because here we meet a set of new characters who are going to be a problem. First and foremost is a Levite by the name of Korah. He's from the same tribe (Levi) and clan (Kohath) as Aaron and Moses, and so he already has his job: the Levites are "*appointed over the tabernacle of the testimony and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it,*" to carry everything holy around and to take care of it (1:50). The Levites pitch their tents right beside God's tent. Kohathites like Korah camp on the south side of the tabernacle (3:29) and have one of the most important jobs: this clan carries the Ark of the Covenant from place to place, "*but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die*" (4:4-15). And it's Aaron and his sons, the priests, who decide which Kohathite carries what (4:19).

Korah is joined on stage here by three men from the tribe of Reuben: a guy named On, and two brothers named Dathan and Abiram. (On doesn't get mentioned again.) These four guys "*took men,*" i.e., gathered them under their self-appointed leadership. Their move is backed by 250 community leaders from Israel, described as having been chosen by a larger assembly as their representatives to support Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On.

To do what? To challenge Moses and Aaron (16:1-3). (Why do people keep doing this?) And what do they say? "*You [Moses and Aaron] take too much for yourselves! For all the congregation, every one of them, is holy, and the LORD is among them! Why, then, do you exalt yourselves above the Assembly of the LORD?*" (16:3-4).

(Continued on Page 3)

**Mount Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church**

**1885 Turkey Hill Road, East Earl, PA 17519**

**Sunday Morning Worship: 10:00 AM**

## **Special Congregational Meeting Notes**

On Sunday, July 9, 2023, we as a church held a special congregational meeting. In attendance were 21 church members with voting privileges as well as 3 non-members. The meeting was called to order as part of our worship service, following the sermon and a prayer. Rev. Jonathan J. Brown served as chairman of the meeting. Calling the meeting to order, he requested the trustees to briefly summarize the purposes of the meeting, which Floyd Mast did. Pastor Jonathan then read out the text of a resolution for consideration:

WHEREAS an inquiry has been received by the trustees of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church regarding the possibility of an outside party purchasing a portion of church-owned land to build a residence upon;

and WHEREAS the bylaws of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church (Article VI, Section 2.c.2) require that the trustees “negotiate for the... sale of [real] property... of the congregation” only “in accordance with the instructions of the congregation”;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the congregation of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church hereby authorizes the trustees of said church to negotiate for the sale of one acre of church-owned real property to a prospective buyer, under conditions as follows:

1. The real property to be sold, with its contents, consists of one acre of church-owned woodland at the northern end of our property, and has 150 feet of road frontage.
2. The trustees expect the buyer to assume the costs of subdividing the land, carrying out a deed survey, performing a perc test, and rezoning the land for residential use.
3. The trustees will seek from the buyer a purchase price of \$135,000, with the final outcome of negotiations subject to the trustees' good judgment.
4. Of this purchase price, the buyer will be required to pay 10% as a downpayment upon the signing of a sale agreement, and the remainder of the purchase price must be paid prior to the trustees deeding the above-specified portion of land over to the buyer.

Following the reading of the resolution, a motion for its adoption was made by Del Ream and seconded by Rebekah Brown. There being no questions, comments, or motions to amend, a vote was taken, in which the motion to adopt this resolution was passed unanimously. As this exhausted the purposes for which the congregational meeting had been called, Ken Bannon made a motion to adjourn. This motion, seconded by Barry Ream, passed unanimously.

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## **Board Meeting Notes (July 2023)**

Last month, the Official Board of Mt. Culmen Evangelical Congregational Church convened its meeting after the worship service and special congregational meeting on Sunday, July 9, 2023, so as to conduct the regular business of the church. In attendance at the meeting were 12 out of the 13 members of our church board: Del Ream, Barry Ream, Floyd Mast, Sharon Mast, Kim Sweigart, Dave Rissler, Joyce Garber, Ian Pammer, Brenna Pammer, Ken Bannon, Rev. Jonathan Brown, and Rebekah Brown.

Opening with prayer and roll call, the board heard the customary reports.

Of these, the treasurer's report submitted *in absentia* by Esther Stauffer noted:

- June 2023 income of \$5,202.59
- June 2023 expenses of \$5,939.07
- a June 30 ending balance of \$11,207.99

The secretary's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Kim Sweigart, seconded by Joyce Garber.

The treasurer's report was accepted unanimously on the motion of Del Ream, seconded by Kim Sweigart.

The stewards had no report to give at this time.

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*(Continued from Page 2, "Board Meeting Notes")*

The trustees had several items to report. First, Floyd Mast highlighted the exceptional work done by trustee Ian Pammer, alongside his wife, steward Brenna Pammer, in putting up the new lights in the fellowship hall. Floyd said that twelve of the light panels themselves would now need to be replaced. Having found that an eight-piece box could be purchased for \$55.60, he said that two boxes would be required, which would give us four spare panels for later use; and he reported his intent to order them the following morning. The trustees also noted that one of the air conditioning units in the fellowship hall kitchen was not functioning, and Floyd said that he would lend one to the church to supply that need through the time of our upcoming picnic, in advance of the still-intended HVAC upgrades to the fellowship hall. Finally, the first of the restored stained-glass windows would be reinstalled the day after the meeting (Monday, July 10), with trustee Dave Rissler on hand to assist Carol Moore; and another would be taken.

Under the heading of old business, the board took up a few brief items. First, looking back on the June soup sale and yard sale event, Pastor Jonathan reported that he had discussed with Yvonne Styer about arranging for a consistent time of year for it as a repeating event, to make it easier to obtain reuseable signs, and that the second Saturday in June would be a suitable recurring date. Upon motion of Barry Ream, as seconded by Ken Bannon, this was set.

Second, Pastor Jonathan asked whether any preparation work needed to be discussed at this time for our August 19 picnic, concert, and auction event. Del reported that Esther Stauffer would be posting a donation list after her return from Alaska at the end of the month. It was also agreed that a work detail would be done at the church before the event. Other details were deferred to the August board meeting.

Under the heading of new business, there was only one item. Pastor Jonathan reported to the board a request that had come to him from Abby Eberly, whose needlework group was in search of a new meeting venue in light of a rise in violence in the area where they had previously been renting space. She had inquired whether the fellowship hall might be available to rent once a month (or every other month, if an additional venue in Lebanon County could also be secured to alternate with). Her group, consisting at times of twelve women but with highly variable attendance, meets on the first Sunday of each month, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. Pastor Jonathan asked that, since this would be a regularly occurring event and would not require use of the fellowship hall kitchen and not produce any increased need for cleaning, the board consider authorizing a discount on the usual hall rental fees. As the board's discussion was highly favorable and converged on a consensus of requesting \$30 per use for the needlework group, Pastor Jonathan made it a motion, which Kim Sweigart seconded. The motion was passed unanimously.

There being no further business after that, on motion of Barry Ream, as seconded by Dave Rissler, the board adjourned its meeting, to reconvene following the worship service on **Sunday, August 6, 2023.**

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*(Continued from Page 1, "Not Too Small a Thing; or, Censored Censers")*

So what we have here is an attack on the authority of Moses (Israel's prophet and lawgiver) and Aaron (Israel's high priest), and everything that they represent: a hierarchy of authority within Israel. Take a close look at the argument Korah & Co. drop on Moses. "You're so full of yourself! You stole power that rightly belongs to the people! After all, you can't deny that all Israelites are holy, that all Israelites have a special relationship with God. See these tassels of ours? There's a priesthood of all Israelites! All who belong to the covenant are priests, so what makes us any less than Aaron? What do we need you for, anyway, Moses? Why shouldn't any of us be able to do all that you two do? God is with us all! Power to the people!" What Korah believes is that the status of all Israel as a 'kingdom of priests' cancels out any priestly hierarchy *within* Israel, any gradations in holy standing that let some (e.g., Aaron) enjoy privileges of seeing/handling holy things from which others (e.g., Korah) are barred. To him, all must be equal.

The fact that Dathan, Abiram, and On – and the 250, if any of them are non-Levites – are involved in this means that it's not just a grab by a Levite. It's an anti-clerical statement from Israel's laity, too. They're saying that the fact that God dwells with the *whole* camp means that *all* have equal access, *all* have equal privilege, *all* should be able to do the kinds of things that Aaron and his sons Ithamar and Eleazar do when it comes to approaching God. Theirs is a powerful articulation of a "priesthood of all believers," but disconnected from any other ideas. It's a radical flattening that threatens to reduce Israel to an egalitarian anarchy. It'd change everything.

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On Sunday, July 2, 2023, we had some special visitors with us at church! Ivan and Virginia Hibshman were the very first couple married at our current Mt. Culmen church building. Our present Mt. Culmen EC Church was dedicated on the afternoon of Sunday, June 26, 1960, with special services of celebration lasting through the following Sunday, July 3, 1960. But during that dedication week, on Saturday, July 2, 1960, in a ceremony beginning at two o'clock in the afternoon, Rev. William Conrad Detterline married Ivan S. Hibshman, 19, to Virginia Ann Witwer, 18, in the first ever wedding in the new church building and location.

Mt. Culmen was Virginia's family's home church for many generations. Virginia was the daughter of James Edwin Witwer, who was a first cousin to future pastor Rev. Emerson Musser, a brother-in-law to church treasurer C. Ray Edwards, and a son of lay delegate William Edgar Witwer. James, his uncle Earl, and his great-uncle James were all trustees at the time the new Mt. Culmen church was built. Ivan, Virginia's new husband, transferred his membership to Mt. Culmen in November 1960, four months after the wedding, becoming a steward immediately, and he later also became a class leader. Although the Hibshmans, having moved to Brownstown, transferred their membership to another church in 1973, Ivan and Virginia were kind enough to come back and celebrate their sixty-third anniversary with us in our lovely church in which they were married. Among relatives of theirs still belonging to our church family are Virginia's first cousin once removed Doris Getz, Virginia's second cousin once removed Violet Stauffer, and Virginia's third cousin Abby Eberly (who is also Ivan's second cousin once removed).

### **Statistical Report (June 2023)**

<u>Worship Service Attendance</u>		<u>Offerings Received</u>
06/04/23	35	\$1,205.00
06/11/23	32	\$690.00
06/18/23	30	\$925.00
<u>06/25/23</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>\$805.00</u>
Average:	32 (32.25)	Total: \$3,625.00

### **Birthdays (August 2023)**

### **Anniversaries (August 2023)**

8/1 – Phyllis Ault      8/2 – Jeremiah Snader      8/3 – Cindy Hoffer  
 8/4 – Madelynne Walker      8/4 – Savannah Walker      8/8 – Grace Nolt

8/3 – Jere and Deb Messner  
 8/22 – Carl Nolt

Please be on the lookout for our next (September 2023) issue, which – God willing – will feature a special piece in memory of Ray Snader, which was unable to be fit into this (August 2023) issue due to space and time constraints.



For a long time, the Evangelical Congregational Church was in the habit of licensing deacons, but reserving rites of ordination for its elders and other pastors, whether local or itinerant. Recently, however, the 2023 EC National Conference approved a change to its policies that introduced a practice of ordaining deacons. And so on Sunday, July 23, 2023, Barry Wayne Heckman (*above right*) – long a licensed EC deacon, frequently a guest preacher at our church, and also the new Executive Director of PCAP (Pennsylvanians Concerned with Alcohol Problems) – received ordination (*above center*) at the hands of Bishop Randy Sizemore, Bishop Emeritus Bruce Hill, and Rev. Matthew Hill (our Ministerial Development Associate) at Akron Grace Evangelical Congregational Church.

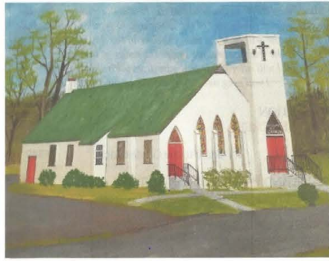
Barry's ordination took place following scripture readings from 1 Samuel 17:18 (by Rev. Les Cool, former pastor of Akron Grace EC, now of Boyertown Trinity EC), Isaiah 41:10 (by Dennis Fulmer, a friend and member of Akron Grace EC), Psalm 136:1-9 (by Barry's daughter and son-in-law Bridgett and Travis Wealand), and a message on Mark 1:1-8 about divine calling from Bishop Randy Sizemore (*above left*), including the following bits of wisdom:

God calls us in different ways, but he never asks for volunteers. ... John the Baptist's commission was, basically, to be a voice crying in the wilderness. Now, who signs up for that? ... Do you ever feel like that, Barry, when you're talking in schools? I think a lot of pastors feel that way even on Sunday mornings in these sacred spaces – like, “Anybody out there?” But you know, our job is not so much about being effectors of transformation, but proclaiming the message of God who does the transformation. ... And so Barry Heckman came preaching the gospel of repentance in places he never thought he would be, talking to people he doesn't have a whole lot in common with, in a co-mission with the God of the universe and the Savior Jesus Christ. Why? Because he wants to? No, because he was called. That's what we celebrate today. You are called to join with Jesus in this commission in that context. Then we will lay hands on you today and tell you to take authority in that context to be God's person in God's position for God's purpose.

Following the closing hymn, “Leaning on the Everlasting Arms,” our own Pastor Jonathan provided a brief historical comment, pointing out that it was written in 1887 by former Evangelical Association pastor Rev. Elisha Albright Hoffman, who had in 1868 served in our district – and, in fact, as pastor of Mt. Culmen, according to church records – immediately after himself being ordained a deacon in the Evangelical Association. “Since Barry has so often stood in E. A. Hoffman's place to preach to the congregation the hymnwriter once served, it seems only fitting that, as we today celebrate Barry's own ordination to the diaconate, it's one of Hoffman's hymns with which we've closed.” Pastor Jonathan then offered a concluding prayer, adapted from a third-century prayer for ordaining deacons and a fourth-century prayer for God's people; and thereafter pronounced the benediction and a dismissal to refreshments.

Please be sure to congratulate Barry Heckman when he next preaches at Mt. Culmen, on Sunday, August 27, 2023!





# TURKEY HILL COMMUNITY PICNIC, CONCERT, AND AUCTION

**When:**

**Saturday, August 19, 2023**

**Where:**

**Mt. Culmen EC Church  
1885 Turkey Hill Rd.  
East Earl, PA**

## Food!



Kitchen opens at noon

Great food for sale  
at unbeatable prices!

Menu includes:

- Hot Dogs
- Hamburgers
- Hamburger Barbecue
- Soups
- Baked Goods
- Ice Cream
- Plenty more!

## Music!



Featuring

## Mountain Gospel Harmony Ministries

The band will play  
in our church pavilion  
in sets at 1:00pm and 3:00pm.

Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy!  
A free-will offering will be taken.

## Sale!



With thanks to auctioneer  
Bob Rissler, an auction  
beginning at 5:00pm will  
include lots like...

- Catered Meals
- Wood Carvings
- Metalwork
- Gift Cards
- Much, Much More!

**Sponsors of this year's event include...**



## Upcoming Church Events

- **Mt. Culmen Picnic / Concert / Auction** – That's right, our big annual church picnic is right around the corner! Saturday, **August 19**, 2023, we'll not only have food for sale from the fellowship hall kitchen, but we'll also enjoy a concert in our pavilion by the group Mountain Gospel Harmony Ministries. Then, at 5:00pm, the auction will begin, and we have lots of donated goods for you to bid on. So come on out! See the advertisement on the previous page for more information – and tell all your friends!

## Upcoming Community Events

- **National Night Out** – On Tuesday, **August 1**, 2023, it's National Night Out, a campaign to improve partnerships between police departments and the communities they serve. At the New Holland Community Park (400 East Jackson Street, New Holland), from 6:00pm to 8:00pm, the New Holland Police Department will be there to join you for a free family event with food, music, activities for kids, and more.
- **New Holland Summer Arts Program** – Throughout the month of August, New Holland Community Park will also continue to host a series of free concerts, 7:00pm to 9:00pm. Acts include Nicks in Time (**August 2**), The New Individuals (**August 5**), Then Sings My Soul (**August 6**), Conley & Watson (**August 9**), Conrad Fisher (**August 12**), Blessing and Fowler (**August 13**), Terry G (**August 16**), and Mitch and the Mood Swings (**August 19**, 6:30pm to 9:00pm).
- **Lunch in the Park** – Each Friday in August (**4, 11, 18, 25**), the pavilion at the Terre Hill Park (210 Lancaster Avenue, Terre Hill) will be selling lunch from 10:30am to 1:30pm, with take-out options available by calling 717-445-7006. The menu includes burgers, hot dogs, chicken sandwiches, baked potatoes, soup, and more.
- **Churchtown Day** – On Saturday, **August 5**, 2023, the town of Churchtown will be celebrating its annual festival, Churchtown Day! From 6:00am to 10:00am, a pancake-and-sausage breakfast will be available at the Caernarvon Fire Hall (2145 Main Street, Narvon), for \$10/adult or \$5/child under 10. The Caernarvon Fire Company will also sell take-home quarts of BBQ pulled pork for \$20/each. And not only will there be the breakfast, but there will be a flea market at the Caernarvon Historical Society (2148 Main Street, Narvon) starting at 7:00am. (To reserve a space for \$15, talk to Yvonne Styer or call her at 717-445-5040.) Besides the breakfast and the flea market, plenty of yard sales will be going on throughout Churchtown.
- **Big Spring Farm Day** – Also on Saturday, **August 5**, 2023, from 9:00am to 4:00pm, the Swiss Pioneer Preservation Association will host an event at 735 Spruce Road, New Holland. In addition to tours of a 1786 log cabin and German singing at 12:05pm, there will be numerous demonstrations, a 1:00pm parade, and food including sausage sandwiches, iron kettle soup, and ice cream made using a hit-and-miss engine.
- **Movie Night in the Park** – Also on Saturday, **August 5**, 2023, the Terre Hill Park (210 Lancaster Avenue, Terre Hill) will host a movie night, with refreshments available from 7:30pm and the movie starting around 8:30pm. This year's film is the 2021 animated musical comedy *Sing 2*. Bring lawn chairs and/or a blanket.
- **Music in the Grove** – On Sunday evenings in June, July, and August, St. John Center Lutheran Church (599 Reading Road, East Earl) hosts free concerts in their grove from 6:00pm to 8:00pm, with light refreshments available for purchase. Bring a lawn chair! Selections for this month include Heart and Soul (**August 6**), Rick Lee and Potter's Clay (**August 13**), Summit Hill (**August 20**), and J-Tyme (**August 27**).
- **Family Bingo and Trivia Night** – On Wednesday, **August 9**, 2023, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm, the Eastern Lancaster County Library (11 Chestnut Drive, New Holland) will host bingo and trivia for the whole family.
- **I'll Fly Away** – On Thursday, **August 10**, 2023, from 7:00pm to 8:00pm, the chapel at Garden Spot Village (433 South Kinzer Avenue, New Holland) will host Servant Stage Company for their show "I'll Fly Away," filled with old-time favorites, bluegrass, hymns, and more.
- **New Holland Summerfest** – On Friday, **August 25**, and Saturday, **August 26**, New Holland Community Park will be the scene of the 2023 New Holland Summer Fest, a national-level BBQ competition, which will benefit both the park and Garden Spot Fire and Rescue. In addition to the competition itself, there will be food vendors, music (a live band Friday 7pm-9pm, a DJ Saturday 11am-2pm), and more.
- **Piano and Violin Concert** – On Saturday, **August 26**, 2023, from 7:00pm to 8:00pm, the chapel at Garden Spot Village will host the musical sisters Philina and Nickita Zhang of New York City for a concert.
- **Community Meal** – On Monday, **August 28**, 2023, from 5:30pm to 6:30pm, CrossNet Ministries will provide a free community meal at their youth center (110 West Franklin Street, New Holland).

## Featured Hymn: “O Day of Rest and Gladness”

### Original Lyrics by Christopher Wordsworth

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. O day of rest and gladness,<br>O day of joy and light,<br>O balm of care and sadness,<br>Most beautiful, most bright;<br>On thee, the high and lowly,<br>Through ages join'd in tune,<br>Sing HOLY, HOLY, HOLY,<br>To the great GOD TRIUNE.                  | 4. Thou art a holy ladder,<br>Where Angels go and come;<br>Each Sunday finds us gladder,<br>Nearer to Heaven, our home;<br>A day of sweet reflection<br>Thou art, a day of love;<br>A day of Resurrection<br>From earth to things above.  |
| 2. On thee, at the Creation,<br>The Light first had its birth;<br>On thee for our salvation,<br>Christ rose from depths of earth;<br>On thee our Lord victorious<br>The Spirit sent from Heaven;<br>And thus on thee most glorious<br>A triple Light was given. | 5. Today on weary nations<br>The heavenly Manna falls;<br>To holy convocations<br>The silver trumpet calls,<br>Where Gospel-light is glowing<br>With pure and radiant beams;<br>And living water flowing<br>With soul-refreshing streams. |
| 3. Thou art a port protected<br>From storms that round us rise;<br>A garden intersected<br>With streams of Paradise;<br>Thou art a cooling fountain<br>In life's dry dreary sand;<br>From thee, like Pisgah's mountain,<br>We view our Promised Land.           | 6. May we, new graces gaining<br>From this our day of rest,<br>Attain the Rest remaining<br>To spirits of the blest;<br>And there our voice upraising<br>To Father and to Son,<br>And Holy Ghost, be praising<br>Ever the THREE IN ONE.   |

Original text taken from Christopher Wordsworth,  
*The Holy Year; or, Hymns for Sundays and Holidays Throughout the Year, and for Other Occasions*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.  
(Rivingtons, 1863 [1862]), pp. 1-3 (hymn #1).

Included in *The Singing Church* as hymn #526 (using verses 1-2, 5-6).

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### Comments by Pastor Jonathan

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885) was born to write hymns – it might as well have been in his blood. Not only was his father, the elder Christopher Wordsworth (1774-1846), a theologian and scholar, but his uncle was William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the poet laureate of Britain! Educated at Cambridge, the younger Christopher eventually was ordained as an Anglican deacon in 1830 and priest in 1835. In 1844, he was given a position at Westminster Cathedral, and then in 1869 gained an appointment as Bishop of Lincoln. An obituary of him from March 1885 said:

For nearly half a century, Christopher Wordsworth has been familiar in the annals of English scholarship and Anglican theology. He has been an active worker in many a useful sphere and a strong fighter in many a forlorn cause. He inherited and illustrated a famous name; he administered and adorned a great historical diocese. He was not indeed an easygoing bishop, nor a tolerant and accommodating theologian. He held strongly to his own convictions and asserted them, on all occasions, with uncompromising pertinacity. ... He was a student rather than a man of action, and his powers of action had been spent rather in theological controversy than in the practical sphere of clerical duty. But so long as his strength lasted, his diocese was administered with admirable devotion and energy, though not perhaps in all cases with discretion. He will be remembered rather as a great controversial divine who feared no man and could teach Popes their place...

(Continued on Page 9)



(Continued from Page 8, "Featured Hymn")

Wordsworth wrote widely in various fields like biblical studies, church history, and classical language, but amidst all that, he found time to write poems and hymns, many of which he released in a volume called *The Holy Year* in 1862. The first hymn found in that volume, and designed as an all-purpose hymn for any Sunday worship service, was "O Day of Rest and Gladness." Consisting initially of six eight-line stanzas, it promptly proved popular – in January 1863, it was widely reprinted by newspapers in states such as Massachusetts, New York, Vermont, Wisconsin, and Louisiana. The hymn itself is a celebration of each and every Sunday as the Lord's Day of worship and joy.

The first verse describes Sunday as a "day of rest and gladness," a "day of joy and light," and the "balm of care and sadness." Sunday is, for us, meant to be a day of rest, to the extent it fills a sabbath-like role in our lives. It is a day set apart from the other six in our weekly routines, and to the best of our abilities, we try to set it apart for joy and soothing, re-centering our hearts on God instead of the anxious cares of our day-to-day lives. Christian tradition has marked Sunday as the day of communal worship, when Christians regularly gather to worship in song. And so, in this hymn, it is on Sunday that "the high and lowly" – all social classes – have, "through ages" (i.e., all generations in church history), "joined in tune" to "sing *Holy, Holy, Holy* / to the great God Triune." Sunday is our day to sing praises together to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, our thrice-holy God!

The second verse explores the "triple light" of three very significant biblical events that all took place on a Sunday. First, on Sunday, "at the creation / the light first had its birth." Sunday, as the first day of the creation week, was the day on which God said, "*Let there be light*" (Genesis 1:3). Second, it was on a Sunday that, "for our salvation, / Christ rose from depths of earth." This points to Easter Sunday, the day Jesus rose to new life, triumphant over death and the grave – a great victory! And third, it was then again on a Sunday – Pentecost Sunday – that Jesus, as "our Lord victorious," sent down the Holy Spirit from heaven, pouring out the Spirit's presence on his gathered disciples, as we read in Acts 2. So Sunday is a weekly commemoration of all three: the light of God's creation, the light of Jesus' resurrection, and the light of the Holy Spirit's advent to fill the church – "a triple light was given!"

The third and fourth verses are often cut from hymnals, and ours is no exception. But they have their own distinctive beauty. The third verse adopts four more images for Sunday: a port, a garden, a fountain, and a mountain. Sunday is meant to be a refreshing refuge from the rigors of the rest of the week. It's like a harbor protected from the sea's storms, because it affords us rest. It's like a garden watered by Eden's rivers, because the psalmist compares a person who meditates on God's word to "*a tree planted by streams of water*" (Psalm 1:3), meaning that Scripture is sort of a virtual Garden of Eden – and the scriptures are opened publicly to the worship assembly every Sunday. And Sunday is a fountain to quench life's arid thirsts, because worshippers gather in the Spirit (cf. Jeremiah 17:13; John 7:38). What's more, the opening of Scripture allows us to catch a view of the 'Promised Land' of the new creation. And so, every time we come together into the Scriptures, it's like the scene in Deuteronomy 34:1-4 where the dying Moses climbed Mount Pisgah so that God could show him what the Promised Land looked like. From Sunday, "like Pisgah's mountain, / we view our promised land." We catch a preview of what Jesus has in store for us!

The fourth verse turns to different biblical images, especially the story of Jacob's Ladder (Genesis 28:10-17), where Jacob, dreaming with a stone for a pillow, saw a ladder stretching to heaven on which angels were ascending and descending, and the Lord was looking down from above it. Jesus identified himself with Jacob's Ladder in John 1:51 ("*You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man*"). Here, in the hymn, Sunday has become Jacob's Ladder, because Sunday is the day of the week where we are invited to encounter Jesus in his word and at his table. Sunday is meant to be a day set apart for heavenly realities.

And naturally, with each Sunday that passes, every believer is one week closer to the date of his or her earthly death – which, as the church used to say, is also a heavenly birthday, an entrance into "heaven, our home." Consequently, each Sunday should make us gladder. Sunday is a "day of sweet reflection" on the hope we have in Jesus. Sunday is a "day of love," as we lovingly praise Jesus and lovingly build one another up. Because Sunday reorients us from the cares of the week to our true calling and true destiny, it is a day to "*set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth*" (Colossians 3:2) – for "*if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is*" (Colossians 3:1).

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The fifth verse turns back to Old Testament imagery: the "heavenly manna" and the feasts of ancient Israel. Surely we remember the story of the manna – how, in answer to the Israelites' complaints of hunger in the desert, God said to Moses, *"Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in my law or not"* (Exodus 16:4). And so *"the house of Israel called its name 'manna.' It was like coriander seed, white, and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey"* (Exodus 16:31). Later, not only does Jesus compare and contrast himself with the manna (*"I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven: if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh"* [John 6:51]), but Jesus ultimately offers *"hidden manna"* as a reward for those who live with an overcoming faith (Revelation 2:17). As the church, we are drawn as representatives from *"weary nations,"* those sore and tired and longing for something heavenly. And on Sunday, when we come to receive Jesus afresh, it's right to say that *"heavenly manna"* is falling on *"weary nations."*

The verse also makes reference to being called by *"silver trumpets."* This refers back to Numbers 10, in which God directs Moses to *"make two silver trumpets"* for use in *"summoning the congregation and for breaking camp."* The instruction is given that, *"when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to [Moses] at the entrance of the tent of meeting,"* while blowing just one is a signal to gather only the tribal chiefs (Numbers 10:2-3). But the trumpets had another function, too: *"On the day of your gladness, also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings"* (Numbers 10:10). The silver trumpets were to be used at Israel's celebrations and festivals, as well as to gather them together at the place where they would meet God.

The use of the trumpets at Israel's *"appointed feasts"* makes sense of the other Old Testament phrase in the verse, the *"holy convocations,"* because in Leviticus 23 and Numbers 28-29, both terms are used for Israel's holidays. Israel is given a list of *"the appointed feasts of Yahweh that you shall proclaim as holy convocations; they are my appointed feasts"* (Leviticus 23:2). These include the sabbath, the Passover, the Feast of Firstfruits, the Feast of Weeks (now best known as 'Pentecost'), the Feast of Trumpets (now best known as 'Rosh Hashanah,' the Jewish New Year), the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), and the Feast of Booths (*Sukkot*). In particular, the Feast of Trumpets was *"a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation: you shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food-offering to Yahweh"* (Leviticus 23:24-25). A convocation is an assembly, a group of people coming together – that's what the Israelites did on these feasts, and even on the sabbath.

Accordingly, Sunday – the Lord's Day – is our Christian *"holy convocation,"* as if summoned by silver trumpets and their loud blasts to gather around God's tabernacle. Why? To celebrate together! To offer up a *"sacrifice of praise"* (Hebrews 13:15), and the sacrifice of our gifts (Philippians 4:18), like ancient peace-offerings and thank-offerings. To fellowship in our Lord's presence, and to eat from his altar. That is our holy convocation, every Sunday – the reason why, to the extent we can, we forgo *"ordinary work"* and other mundane pursuits so that we can be free to answer the summons of the gospel trumpet! Just as the glory shone from the tabernacle, so when we gather together each Sunday, *"gospel-light is glowing / with pure and radiant beams."* And, because the Spirit moves among us, we find *"living water flowing / with soul-refreshing streams"* out of the Scriptures.

Lastly, the sixth and final verse suggests that, if we celebrate Sunday rightly, each time we will be *"gaining new graces."* And if we continue to do so, we will *"reach the rest remaining / to spirits of the blessed."* This refers to the use of the wilderness stories in Hebrews 3-4. The Israelites led out of Egypt, for the most part, died in the desert due to their rebellion (Hebrews 3:16-18). Because of their unbelief, they could not enter God's 'rest' (Hebrews 3:19). So *"the promise of entering his rest still stands"* – as yet unfulfilled (Hebrews 4:1). And by trusting in Jesus, *"we who have believed enter that rest,"* the rest God began on the first sabbath (Hebrews 4:3). *"So then, there remains a sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest"* (Hebrews 4:9-11).

Sunday, as a worshipful 'day of rest' through which we grow in grace, helps us to do exactly that. And when we get to that rest, we expect to continue lifting up sacrifices of praise (*"our voice upraising"*) to God the Holy Trinity, for all ages! Sunday thus foreshadows eternity, reminding us of all that God has promised and will be faithful to fulfill!

(Continued from Page 3, "Not Too Small a Thing; or, Censored Censers")

So what does Moses think of this new theological vision that Korah & Co. have discovered? Well... he's not a fan of it, actually. He answers Korah, and other unnamed Levite co-conspirators, first: *"Is it too small a thing for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself, to do service in the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister to them, and that he has brought you near him, and all your brothers the sons of Levi with you? And would you seek the priesthood also?"* (16:9-10). Moses is laying it on thick, but with a purpose. He first lays out all the immense privileges that every Levite already has, the work they do that Dathan and Abiram can't. Levites have, by the fact of their birth, been brought physically closer to God. They've been hired to perform a tabernacle-related ministry of assisting the priests, and standing in front of all Israel to minister to them in God's name. That's a big thing! And Korah, along with all other sons of Levi, does that. So isn't that enough to fill his appetite for glory? Does he really need to be a priest? Can Korah not bear the idea that there's a hierarchy in Israel, an order in the world, in which he's just one rung below the top?

Moses thus accuses Korah of being power hungry – the same charge Korah had thrown at Moses – and points out that what Korah is asking for is simply not the job description that God dictated to him. It was God who called Aaron and Korah to different orders and different ministries, and it's no business of Korah's to overthrow what God has done. For that reason, Moses says, Korah's rebellion isn't really an attack on Aaron, but ultimately is an attack on the God whose word is what distinguished Aaron's priests from Korah's Levites, and both from Israel (16:11).

Clearly, neither Korah and his Levites, nor Dathan and Abiram and their laity, are convinced. So Moses calls for a special meeting the very next morning – a dawn showdown. Korah at least has the guts to show up. But not Dathan and Abiram. They outright refuse Moses' invitation, accusing Moses of being a tyrant who failed to follow through on his duty to get them their promised land – as if their own rebellion isn't what kept them in the desert! These guys insist they can't trust Moses not to underhandedly arrest and brutalize them if they show up (16:13-14). What a cruel caricature, what an outrageous insult, against the man who's been keeping them alive with his prayers!

Morning arrives, and the plan is to put this controversy to a test. Moses and Korah each insist that God is the author of their vision for how Israel should work. So, the idea is, run an experiment: put both visions into simultaneous action and see which God accepts. Part of the tabernacle complex is an incense altar, overlaid with gold (Exodus 30:1-5). It's kept inside the tabernacle itself, in a space off-limits to non-priests while the tabernacle is in operation (Exodus 30:6). (Korah knows that, because it's Kohathites like him who carry the incense altar from place to place, but only after it's been covered; Korah doesn't even have permission to *look* at the incense altar [Numbers 4:11, 20].) Every morning, when Aaron dresses the lamps in the menorah, he has to offer incense on that incense altar (Exodus 30:7). So, Moses says, if you think your service is identical to Aaron's, if you think your 'priesthood of all Israelites' is the same thing as Aaron's call, then by all means, join him. Show up to the incense offering, and approach the LORD God Almighty: *"Let every one of you take his censer and put incense on it, and every one of you bring before the LORD his censer, 250 censers; you also, and Aaron, each his censer"* (Numbers 16:17).

Israel should already realize that this is a very important and high-stakes task, because two of Aaron's own sons – Nadab and Abihu, both fully ordained priests – were killed for using *"strange fire"* as part of an incense offering (Leviticus 10:1-2). After that example, for Korah and the 250 princes to boldly be 'strange priests' is... just idiocy, let's be honest! But this is exactly what they do. Korah doesn't flinch from putting his money where his mouth is – more's the pity, in this case. *"So every man took his censer, and put fire in them, and laid incense on them, and stood at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting with Moses and Aaron"* (Numbers 16:18). Not only that, but – making it clear what his agenda actually was all along – Korah puts himself forward as the *de facto* leader of Israel, and calls the whole congregation to join him as a mob against Moses, right in front of God's face (16:19)!

The result is... well, what would **you** expect the result to be? God's not impressed! In fact, he's mad enough to torch Israel in its entirety, with Moses and Aaron alone spared (16:20-21). And, yet again, the two pray humbly to God, asking him not to blame all Israel for unthinkingly letting their passions be manipulated by the real villains: Korah and his company. They're false teachers misleading Israel straight to the mouth of hell – they must be stopped.

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(Continued from Page 11, "Not Too Small a Thing; or, Censored Censers")

Israel is warned solemnly to steer clear of the false teachers, the presumptuous 'priests' who are no priests – to “*get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram*” (16:24). Moses tells the masses: “*Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with their sins*” (16:27). Moses stakes his entire reputation as a prophet on his conviction that God isn't going to let them get away with it – that God will show where this sort of thing leads (16:28-30). Sure enough, Dathan and Abiram, with their families, and Korah, minus his sons, gather at Dathan and Abiram's tents, which are in the Reubenite camp south of the tabernacle (just beyond the Kohathites [2:10]); and there, God dramatically has the earth itself eat them alive (16:31-32). “*So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol [the underworld], and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, 'Lest the earth swallow us up!'*” (16:33-34). As for the 250 princes playing priest, they got the Nadab and Abihu treatment – “*fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men offering the incense*” (16:35).

All of them were remembered as “*these men who have sinned at the cost of their lives*” (16:38). In response to this dramatic punishment by God, Aaron's son Eleazar gets a new job. He's to collect, out of the still-burning holy fire that spat out of the tabernacle, the 250 bronze censers in which the princes had presumed to burn their incense, and he's to ditch the coals and ash (16:37). Then he's to have their bronze censers beaten down and hammered thin for display, because the censers – in spite of their presumptuous use – have been sanctified by the sacred flames (16:38). So the priest Eleazar obeys God's command (relayed through Moses) to the letter (16:39). The point of this new artifact, the bronze altar-plate (which will cover the 'brazen altar' of animal sacrifice that's outside the tabernacle, and thus will be visible to all Israelites, and especially to the Levites who are near it all the time), is “*to be a reminder to Israel, so that no outsider who is not of the seed of Aaron should draw near to burn incense before the LORD, lest he become like Korah and his company*” (16:40). From henceforth, nobody should pridefully risk sinning Korah's sin!

This is an exhausting story – partly because Israel seems to have the memory of a goldfish when it comes to taking the hint to trust and obey! It's a saddening story, insofar as Israel's rebellious heart is such a recurring theme in this book, and is vividly on display here. It's a troubling story, insofar as there's plenty of wrath to go around (since the Book of Numbers shows us God deliberately 'outsourcing' his voice of mercy to Moses – so we're not meant to infer anything about God's character without taking Moses' voice into account here). It's also a sobering story.

Its aftermath echoed down through the Old Testament. To the next generation, Moses extolled God's punishment of Dathan and Abiram as one of God's great works (Deuteronomy 11:6). “*But the sons of Korah did not die*” (Numbers 26:11), and their descendants would go on to make up for their ancestor's legacy. In fact, one of them was Samuel – he was a direct descendant of Korah (1 Chronicles 6:33-37)! It was Samuel who anointed David for his future as the king of Israel, and David chose a number of Korahites to be among his thirty 'mighty men' (1 Chronicles 12:6). Once David was king, he overhauled the worship of the tabernacle and created a worship team, including Samuel's grandsons Heman and Joel. Eleven of the psalms are ascribed to “*the sons of Korah*” (Psalms 42, 44-49, 84-85, 87-88). Moreover, “*the Korahites... were in charge of the work of the service, keepers of the thresholds of the tent, as their fathers had been in charge of the camp of the LORD, keepers of the entrance*” (1 Chronicles 9:19). That was the sort of grand ministry that **could** have been Korah's, had he remained faithful. King David, when betrayed in his old age, prayed for his persecutors to be punished like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Psalm 55:16). Later, under David's descendant King Jehoshaphat, “*the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, with a very loud voice*” (2 Chronicles 20:19). But his descendant King Uzziah, becoming proud and careless, dared to pull a stunt like Korah's: he tried to offer his own incense in God's temple, and was rewarded with leprosy (2 Chronicles 26:16-21).

But we might wonder if this story has anything to teach us today. After all, the New Testament makes very clear that the priesthood of Aaron and his sons was only for a time, because its ministry couldn't accomplish God's ultimate goals for us (Hebrews 7:11). Therefore, for our good, there has been “*a change in the priesthood*” (Hebrews 7:12). Korah's dream of everybody-a-priest, without distinction, maybe sounds a bit like what we believe today! But is it? Is the cautionary tale of Korah and his company now irrelevant, outdated, with nothing left to teach us? Or did the story of Korah's rebellion “*happen to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come*” (1 Corinthians 10:11)?

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If we read the writings of the first generations of Christians, we find that they thought the story of Korah and Dathan and Abiram and the rest had *plenty* of relevance to new-covenant Christians. Yes, it's true that, just as Israel was to be a "*kingdom of priests*" (Exodus 19:6), now Christians are similarly "*a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation*" (1 Peter 2:9). But Aaron and Korah both being members of a 'kingdom of priests' didn't make their order or their ministry the same, so we shouldn't be hasty to apply Korah's logic to the 'priesthood of all believers.'

The Apostle Jude warns about some people in his day who've "*crept in*" to churches to teach ideas contrary to "*the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.*" In doing so, these "*ungodly people... pervert the grace of our God into sensuality, and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ*" (Jude 3-4). Jude accuses these creeping-in Christians of being people who, like Dathan and Abiram, "*reject authority*" in the Church (Jude 8). Obviously, there has to be authority exercised in the Church if somebody can get in trouble for rejecting it. And so, Jude concludes, these perverters of God's grace – people who talk about God's grace as a pretext to get their own way, do what they want, and assert their own influence – as having, already in advance, "*perished in Korah's rebellion*" (Jude 11).

After the time of the apostles, the Church continued to have to watch out for people like this. Once Paul was killed for his faith – he was beheaded in Rome around the year 68 – the church in Corinth fell into yet another crisis. Some members of the rising generation, eager to grab the reins of control, deposed the leaders put into place in Corinth by Paul, and began to run the show themselves. People alarmed at this wrote to Rome, to Paul's co-worker Clement, who was still alive and in leadership there. Clement answered back that the upstarts had created "an abominable and unholy schism" – 'schism' is a word for a division, a church split. He reminded them pointedly that the same kind of envy which motivated their presumptuous takeover was exactly what had "plunged Dathan and Abiram alive into Hades for having rebelled against Moses the servant of God," because "the heart of those who rebelled against God's servant Moses was hardened, and the verdict on them was plain."

Not quite a century later, Bishop Irenaeus of Lyons – who'd been mentored by Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna, who had been appointed by the Apostle John himself – was faced with a growing 'Christian' movement that rejected the mainstream Church in favor of elite spiritual gatherings with trendy teachings. Irenaeus warned them that "such as rise up in opposition to the truth, and exhort others against the Church of God, remain among those in hell..., even as those who were with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram." Therefore, "it is incumbent to obey the presbyters who are in the Church – those who possess the succession from the apostles," Irenaeus ordered them, and to "keep away" from supposedly 'Christian' gatherings that are either heretical (teaching strange doctrine) and/or schismatic (separatist).

In the early third century, Origen, a teacher in the church at Alexandria, preached on this story and explained that "Korah contains a figure of those who rise up against ecclesiastical faith and the teaching of the truth," because like him and his 250 chieftains, "the heretics place a 'strange fire' by introducing a meaning and an interpretation that is estranged from God and contrary to the truth," and any teaching "alien to the truth should be immediately expelled from the church of God." And a couple decades later, Bishop Cyprian of Carthage – faced with separatist groups who believed all the same Christian teachings but set up their own rival churches – described such a separatist as somebody who, "despising the bishops and abandoning the priests of God, dares to set up another altar... and not to know that he who struggles against God's plan on account of his rash daring is punished by divine censure. Thus Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who tried to assume for themselves in opposition to Moses the freedom to sacrifice, immediately paid the penalty for their efforts." Cyprian added: "Christ is one, and his Church is one, and... whatever departs from the parent-stem will not be able to breathe and live apart."

By the end of the third century, a church manual called the *Didascalia Apostolorum* – "Teaching of the Apostles" – also applied the story of Korah to church life: "Any of you who loves to be first and dares to form a schism will, together with those with him, inherit the place of Korah and Dathan and Abiram, and with them shall be condemned to the fire. For even those who were with Korah were Levites and were ministers in the tent of witness, yet they loved to be first and coveted the high priesthood. ... Even though they gave the appearance of purity, holiness, and chastity, their final end was fire and everlasting burning." In other words, apparent goodness, purity, stringent living – it's not enough to make up for sins like schism, envy, and pride, which risk leading to hell.

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And in the fourth century, confronted again with a whole network (denomination?) of alternative 'pure' churches who held themselves out as the rightful church, Bishop Optatus of Milevis turned to this story to drive home his point to them about why their denominationalism was wrong: "Without any qualms, you've imitated Dathan and Abiram and Korah," even though "this evil is both forbidden by God's word and severely avenged when committed!" Korah and his company, Optatus believed, had "declared war on God" through their "desire for a priesthood that wasn't theirs by right." So, he asked these break-away Christian churches, "what are you going to say in answer to this – you who, having usurped the name of 'church,' covertly nourish a schism and brazenly defend it?"

I'm sure I've already tried your patience sorely by reciting this list of early Christians, but the point is this: from the very beginnings of the Christian faith, Christians have understood the story of Korah to be relevant, not just to Jewish life under the old covenant, but to Christian life under the new covenant. They warned plenty of people that they were in danger of the same kinds of sin as Korah & Co., and could expect God to take it just as seriously, if not as immediately, now. This means that we should pay careful attention to how they applied Korah's story to our day.

First, there's what we might call (for lack of a better word) anti-clericalism. Let's go back to the most literal sense of the Book of Numbers. Korah was right in observing that there was a 'priesthood of all Israel,' a kind of priestly life shared in common by every Israelite, which brought with it a special dignity and a special responsibility for holiness. And with that one thought boldly in mind, Korah could not see room for a different kind of priestly role *within* Israel, the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. Moses believed in *both* the common priesthood of all Israel *and* the special priesthood of Aaron; Korah pit them against each other, and rejected the special in favor of the common.

For most of Christian history, people believed firmly in the Apostle Peter's description of all Christians as a "*royal priesthood*" (1 Peter 2:9), and they also believed that some people *within* the Church, like in Israel, were called – under Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest – to exercise special priestly functions to minister *to* the Church, like Aaron and his sons were. Both priesthoods were affirmed, at least in theory; in practice, little emphasis was sometimes put on the common priesthood, with the result that, amidst widespread corruption, the people ('laity') began to resent those who were ordained to these separate roles ('clergy'). Into this resentment stepped teachers who were very keen to correct the overemphasis on the special priesthood, but some did this by tearing it down entirely, and claiming that there was only a 'priesthood of all believers.' One, for example, insisted that "we are all priests of equal standing," that "there is no true, basic difference between laymen and priests," so "there are not two kinds of priesthood in Christendom." He thought that ministers held authority only as delegated by the congregation, so "no one individual can arise by his own authority and arrogate to himself what belongs to all" – as Korah would've surely said to Moses.

Today, these ideas have become commonplace. I myself have listened to some fellow pastors talk about the need to finally get rid, once and for all, of *any* idea of a clergy versus laity distinction, because all ministries are different but equal. But I wonder if we've thrown the baby out with the bathwater. If I'm honest, these ideas mostly seem to boil down to saying that Korah's only problem was being ahead of his time! And that's not quite what I find in my Bible.

Second, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram stand in our Bibles as a warning against the sin of schism. The word 'schism' is related to a more common English word: scissors. Schism is the sin of taking a scissors to the fabric of the church. Now, one way to do that would be to be divisive, contentious, quarrelsome people in the church, forcing people to take sides 'for us' or 'against us.' Paul found this problem in Corinth: "*When you come together as a church, I hear that there are schisms among you*" when the rich treated the poor differently than themselves (1 Corinthians 11:18). Another way would be to create factions in the church, opposing sides who claim to represent different perspectives. Paul found that problem in Corinth, too: "*Each one of you says, 'I follow Paul!' or 'I follow Apollos!' or 'I follow Cephas!' or 'I follow Christ!'"*" (1 Corinthians 1:12). Paul appealed to them that "*all of you agree, and that there be no schisms among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment*" (1 Corinthians 1:10).

In today's 'church shopping' culture, in which we pop in and out of churches according to our desire, and see no issue with people starting a new church on a whim, the words of people like Cyprian and Optatus against separatists seem strange. But the Apostle Paul urges that God desires there to be "*no schism in the body*" (1 Corinthians 12:25)

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All these things – especially depending on our motives – reflect what Korah was all about. Korah was a divider, one who tried to create factions in Israel, who tried to create an alternative to Moses and Aaron. Dathan and Abiram took a further step, refusing to gathering with any assembly called together by Moses. God, in his own way, was willing to recognize a schism that had taken place: a schism between Israel, on the one hand, and Moses and Aaron, on the other – and such a schism would lead to Israel's destruction. But Moses and Aaron pleaded their solidarity with the body called Israel, choosing to be a united body with the congregation, even as Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were (in effect) excommunicated from that communion. St. Clement reminds us of the spiritual danger of schism.

A third warning Korah and his company give us is a warning against a sin we might call 'heresy.' 'Heresy' comes from the Greek word for 'choice,' as in, picking and choosing what to believe. Sometimes, we can even do this while claiming to just be 'believing the Bible,' if what we're really believing is our own *personal interpretation* of the Bible – whatever we think it means, without reference to what all Christians have always believed. Usually, a heresy will take two things that Christianity keeps together ('both X and Y') and splits them apart ('X, so not Y!' or 'Y, so not X'). Heresies like that are simpler than the truth, and often contain some piece of truth that they exaggerate, but they give up too much of the rest of the truth in the name of that simplicity. And then, of course, there are other heresies that are just plain *weird*, like the elaborate myths Paul warns about: *"The time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but, having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths"* (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

When the early Christians tell us that Korah is an image of "those who rise up against ecclesiastical faith... by introducing a meaning and an interpretation that is estranged from God and contrary to the truth," it dovetails with just how seriously the Bible takes believing and teaching the actual truth, the real Christian message. Jude stresses the importance of staying fully faithful to *"the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3). This begins with those who teach in the church, who are responsible to *"give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it"* (Titus 1:9). Christians are *"not to teach any different doctrine"* (1 Timothy 1:3), and *"if anyone teaches a different doctrine, and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the doctrine that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing"* (1 Timothy 6:3) – a description that sounds a lot like Korah. Instead, we're meant to grow in Christian knowledge *"so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine"* (Ephesians 4:14). When Paul lists the *"works of the flesh"* that oppose the fruit of the Spirit, his list includes *"rivalries, dissensions, heresies"* (Galatians 5:20). He adds that *"as for a heretical man, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned"* (Titus 3:10).

Finally, a fourth warning we can take from Korah is about what we might call 'playing church politics.' After all, isn't that exactly what Korah did? He was grasping for power, control, and influence within the church of his day, the Assembly of the LORD. He attempted to get people riled up against his church leadership (Moses and Aaron), and Dathan and Abiram called Moses a deceiver and a dictator! Why? All because, in the end, Korah wanted more power, more prominence, more privilege for himself. He wanted to be the guy everybody listened to. Korah played church politics. ...And then the earth ate him. 'Church politics,' it turns out, doesn't pay!

Jude tells us also that Korah is a template for all sorts of people who *"reject authority,"* who don't have listening ears or soft hearts, who won't abide church discipline, and who are looking out for themselves, regardless of what noble-sounding principles they couch their claims in. Second Peter similarly points out *"the unrighteous... walking after the flesh in the passion of defilement and despising authority"* (2 Peter 2:9-10). Words like 'authority' and 'discipline' aren't popular in 21st-century American Christianity. But then the Bible goes and challenges us with Korah.

This is a long article, and its topics aren't fun; I know I wrestle with them. They're strange, they're unpopular, they're unpleasant. But that's because sin is such an ugly thing, and judgment hurts. We of an Evangelical persuasion often say we've got the guts to talk about sin... but maybe the test of that boast is whether we're still listening when it gets uncomfortable and dull. Korah & Co. illustrate some of the sins we might be least likely to think about or recognize as a problem. May God make us instead like Aaron and Moses, who prayed for all those at risk of being led astray after Korah. And may God help us understand that, in his service, there is **no such thing** as *"too small a thing!"*

## **Preaching Calendar (August – September 2023)**

Worship services commence at 10:00 AM on Sundays. We hope to see you there with us!

- August 6 (Pentecost 10):** Sermon Title: “The Birds Their Carols Raise”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:20-23  
“All Things Bright and Beautiful” (42)  
“This is My Father's World” (50)
- August 13 (Pentecost 11):** Sermon Title: “All Creatures Great and Small”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:24-25  
“Vast Are Thy Works, Almighty Lord” (insert)  
“All Creatures of Our God and King” (43)
- August 20 (Pentecost 12):** Sermon Title: “Six, Seven, Rest”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:1—2:4  
“Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above” (5)  
“O Day of Rest and Gladness” (526)
- August 27 (Pentecost 13):** Pastor Jonathan will be on vacation from August 21-29.  
Barry W. Heckman, ordained EC deacon, will be our guest preacher.  
Sermon Title: “Behold, I Make All Things New!”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:4-9; 3:22-24 + Revelation 21:1-7  
“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (74)  
“Christ is Coming! Let Creation” (169)
- September 3 (Pentecost 14):** Sermon Title: “Dust of Earth, Wind of Heaven”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:4-7  
“O Worship the King, All Glorious Above” (17)  
“Lord, What Was Man When Made at First” (insert)
- September 10 (Pentecost 15):** Sermon Title: “The Garden of Delight”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:8-14; 3:8a  
“For the Beauty of the Earth” (49)  
“I Come to the Garden Alone” (349)
- September 17 (Pentecost 16):** Sermon Title: “Gardening a Good Earth”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:8-15  
“I Sing the Almighty Power of God” (48)  
“God, Who Touches Earth with Beauty” (401)
- September 24 (Pentecost 17):** Sermon Title: “Idols with a Pulse”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:26; 2:4-8  
“Worship the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness” (insert)  
“Children of the Heavenly Father” (37)
- October 1 (Pentecost 18):** Sermon Title: “Sanctifying Service”  
Scripture Reading: Genesis 2:8-15  
“A Charge to Keep I Have” (489)  
“The Race of God's Anointed Priests” (insert)

## Quotes for Thought

“What is terrible to us? Nothing except straying from God and divine things. Let the rest be as God designs; he ordains us for righteousness through either favorable weapons on the right or ominous weapons on the left. The One who administers our life knows the reasons for these things. Let us fear only one thing: unphilosophical suffering. We take care of the poor, show brotherly love, and revel in the singing of psalms as much as possible. Say we're not permitted this; let's practice philosophy another way – grace is not impoverished. Let us be alone, let us contemplate, let us purify our mind with divine expositions...”

– St. Gregory of Nazianzus

*Letter 215, to Sacerdos (c. AD 383), in Gregory of Nazianzus's Letter Collection (University of California Press, 2019), 87*

“The person who lives according to God and not according to man must be a lover of the good, and it follows that he will hate the evil. And since no one is evil by nature, but whoever is evil is evil due to some fault, the person who lives according to God... will neither hate the person because of the fault, nor love the fault because of the person, but will rather hate the fault and love the person. For once the fault is cured, all that he should love will remain, and nothing will remain that he should hate.”

– St. Augustine of Hippo

*On the City of God, Against the Pagans 14.6 (AD 426), in The Works of St. Augustine 1/7:106*

“Without love towards God and love towards our neighbor, the work of our prayer is vain.”

– Abraham bar Lipah

*Commentary on the Liturgical Offices 16 (c. AD 690), in Anthology of Syriac Writers from Qatar... (Gorgias Press, 2015), 107*

“[The Lord's Prayer] is the wisdom of the heart and the soul's honey and the mind's milk, the most blessed of glories. It can fetch the soul from perpetual night under the earth, no matter how far down the enemy fastens it with fetters. ... It destroys hunger, ravages hell, breaks the surge, builds glory. It is bolder than the foundation of middle earth, stronger than the grip of all stones.”

– an unknown Old English poet

*Solomon and Saturn lines 66-76 (c. AD 890-980), in Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library 32:139*

“There [in heaven], with all hearts united by the bond of mutual love, none will differ from another in any way, but all will associate unanimously in a common exercise of will. ... In heaven there is an absence of ignorance and of impossibility, because by their union with wisdom, the blessed know all things and, with omnipotence, they are able to do all things. There we will be face-to-face with things revealed: how the Father ineffably begets the Son, and how the Holy Spirit proceeds from them both. ... The sweet odor of this place exceeds the powers of all perfumes, surpasses the fragrance of all spices. There melodious instruments caress the ears of the blessed with sweet harmony. There, amid green pastures that fill one with pleasant delight, snow-white lilies never wither... Certainly, the reality of the everlasting happiness of the heavenly Jerusalem is incomparably greater than the mind of man can ever conceive, and the mind grasps more than can ever be put in words.”

– St. Peter Damian

*Letter 66.28-29, to the countess-turned-nun Blanche (c. AD 1060), in Fathers of the Church: Medieval Continuation 3:68*

“Blessed indeed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. With such a beatitude in view, with so inestimable a gain or loss at stake, with such a prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus to yearn for, all we forego, or can by any possibility be required to forego, becomes – could we but behold it with purged impartial eyes – becomes as nothing. True, all our lives long we shall be bound to refrain our soul and keep it low: but what then? ... For the pleasures we miss, we shall abide, and for evermore abide, in the rapture of heaven.”

– Christina G. Rossetti

*Letter and Spirit: Notes on the Commandments (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1883), 103-104*

“The church, the body of Christ, has two basic purposes for its existence: worship and witness. All other functions point to and should aid in fulfilling these two purposes. A church that is not worshipping or is not working at worshipping with greater humility and joy has lost the empowering purpose of its existence.”

– Scott W. Sunquist

*Understanding Christian Mission: Participation in Suffering and Glory (Baker Academic, 2013), 281*



## PRAYER GUIDE

- *We praise God* for all the wondrous blessings he's given us, most notably the ministry of his Son (in death, resurrection, and exaltation to the Father's right hand) and the gift of his Holy Spirit; and *we pray* that God would glorify his name above all else and would bring his kingdom more fully to earth.
- *We pray for our denomination, our congregation, and the church universal*, that God would bless us at all levels with faithfulness, wisdom, vision, and fortitude to earnestly labor in his vineyard.
  - *We pray particularly for* our pastor **Rev. Jonathan J. Brown** and for **our church board**.
  - *We pray also for* **our Evangelical Congregational Church leadership**: our bishop **Randy Sizemore**, executive director **Kevin Henry**, and district field director **Keith Miller**; the **Global Ministries Community** under **Ted Rathman**; the **Kingdom Extension Community** under **Mike Snedeker**; the **Church Health Community** under **Gary Kuehner**; the **Missional Alignment Community** under **Bishop Randy Sizemore**; and the **Ministerial Development Community** under **Matthew Hill**.
- *We pray for our missionary partners* (such as **Dan Quigley** and others), that God would keep them safe and faithful, would focus their efforts on God's work, and would grant success in accordance with his holy will.
- *We pray for other churches and pastors in our community*, that God would keep all congregations united in one holy faith and devoted to the ardent service of one and the same kingdom and of its King, Jesus.
- *We pray for the salvation of our whole community and its maturation in Christian discipleship*, knowing that there is hope in Jesus for all people and for entire communities to reflect the righteous love of God.
- *We pray for an end to disease outbreaks* such as coronavirus, mpox, cholera, dengue, diphtheria, and RSV.
- *We pray for an easing to the economic suffering around the world*, especially due to the inflation surge.
- *We pray for those suffering in the wake of disasters around the world*, that God would have mercy:
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by natural disasters such as famine; drought; the Asian, European, and North American heatwaves; wildfires in Spain, Greece, Italy, Algeria, Kazakhstan, and Canada; storms in Italy, Iran, Russia, the Balkans, the Philippines, and Illinois; flooding in China, Mongolia, Pakistan, India, South Korea, Afghanistan, Italy, New York, and Vermont; landslides in Pakistan, China, India, and Japan.
  - *We pray for* those afflicted by accidents such as car crashes in England and Washington; plane crashes in Iceland, Poland, Sudan, Canada, and California; helicopter crashes in Nepal and Australia; boat accidents in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Senegal, and the Philippines; bus crashes in India, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Algeria, Senegal, Egypt, and Illinois; the bridge collapse in Greece; building collapses in Pakistan, Egypt, China, Cameroon, and Montana; fires in Cambodia, Italy, Mexico, China, Netherlands, New Jersey; gas leaks in Egypt and South Africa; explosions in Japan, Russia, Afghanistan, India, Nigeria, Brazil, Thailand; etc.
- *We pray also for those victimized by violence and social ills, especially the Russian invasion of Ukraine*, that the God of all comfort would make his presence manifest to the injured, traumatized, and grieving.
  - *We pray additionally for* those afflicted by the Uyghur genocide in China; warfare in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, and elsewhere; the Israel-Palestine, India-Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan, and Armenia-Azerbaijan conflicts; insurgency in Egypt, Colombia, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, the Maghreb, Nigeria, Niger, India, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Mozambique, Pakistan, South Sudan, Turkey, Myanmar, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, and Libya; clashes in Tunisia; gang/cartel wars in Mexico, Ecuador, and Haiti; kidnappings in Mexico, Uganda, Nigeria, etc.; protest suppression in Kenya; riots in France; rocket attacks in Ukraine, Sudan, etc.; mass shootings in Canada, South Africa, Cameroon, New Zealand, Congo, Ecuador, Maryland, Texas, Illinois, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Michigan, Kansas, Georgia, Washington DC, and Philadelphia; mass stabbings in South Korea; bombings in Syria, Congo, Pakistan, and Somalia; arson in Mexico; the vehicle-ramming attack in Israel; attacks on schools in China, villages in Congo, camps in India and the West Bank, etc.; attacks on churches, especially in India; the American opioid epidemic; human rights violations (e.g., abortion and human trafficking); and the refugee crisis.
- *We pray for* all who serve and protect us, including **civic leaders, police, firefighters, medical responders, and members of the military**: May God keep them safe, just, wise, sincere, humble, and accountable as they administer justice, guard against chaos, prevent harm, and defend the vulnerable.
- *We pray for our nation and its government* at all levels and in all branches, that God would move our leaders to repent of unjust or unmerciful practices and laws; that God would crown them with wisdom, security, peace, and civility toward all; and that God would give them godly hearts to live and govern rightly.

## PRAYER GUIDE

- *We pray for the persecutors and maligners of the church around the world:*
  - *We pray for* the conversion of terrorists and other people of violence into disciples of the Prince of Peace.
  - *We pray for* the wisdom of God to be made manifest to skeptics and critics.
  - *We pray for* the Spirit's boldness to fill the hearts of all believers to witness to Jesus in life and in death.
- *We pray for the families and friends of many who have entered their rest in the past year, including:*
  - For the family of **Shirley Jacobs** (Ken Bannon's cousin), who entered rest on August 10, 2022.
  - For the family of **George Hilton Jr.** (Stephanie Bills' brother), who entered rest on August 11, 2022.
  - For the family of **Marian Rissler** (Dave's sister-in-law), who entered rest on September 1, 2022.
  - For the family of **Linda Kohl** (Clair's wife, Del's sister-in-law), who entered rest on September 3, 2022.
  - For the family of **Erma Martin** (Shirley Good's friend), who entered rest on September 24, 2022.
  - For the family of **Sharon Brubaker** (Skip's cousin/Grace's niece), who entered rest September 24, 2022.
  - For the family of **Norbert Sedelbauer** (Ruth Snader's uncle), who entered rest on October 5, 2022.
  - For the family of **Jean Adams** (Sharon Horst's mother), who entered rest on October 14, 2022.
  - For the family of **Gary Sedelbauer** (Ruth Snader's cousin), who entered rest on October 26, 2022.
  - For the family of **Roy Sweigart** (Kim's father-in-law), who entered rest on November 16, 2022.
  - For the family of **Ginger Goudie** (the Hesses' friend Jim's wife), who entered rest November 28, 2022.
  - For the family of **Patricia Dietz** (Bob Dietz's wife), who entered rest on December 3, 2022.
  - For the family of **Bob Dietz**, who entered rest on December 4, 2022.
  - For the family of **Earl Pickel**, who entered rest on December 19, 2022.
  - For the family of **David Hurst**, who entered rest on December 22, 2022.
  - For the family of **Letty Clark**, who entered rest on December 25, 2022.
  - For the family of **Bob Forrey**, who entered rest on January 5, 2023.
  - For the family of **Paul Bauman** (Joyce Good's brother), who entered rest on January 6, 2023.
  - For the family of **June Harter** (Sue Eshelman's mother), who entered rest on January 24, 2023.
  - For the family of **Darlene Young**, who entered rest on February 1, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mike Diem**, who entered rest on February 8, 2023.
  - For the family of **Alvin Wise** (Jean Hess' uncle), who entered rest on February 22, 2023.
  - For the family of **Grace Sprecher** (Sharon Mast's aunt), who entered rest on February 22, 2023.
  - For the family of **Herman Martin**, who entered rest on February 25, 2023.
  - For the family of **Leon Hartranft**, who entered rest on March 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Amanda Hoffert**, who entered rest on March 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Lois Gift**, who entered rest on March 20, 2023.
  - For the family of **William Riegel** (Del's brother-in-law), who entered rest on March 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **Darryl Imler** (Leroy Stoltzfus' nephew), who entered rest on April 1, 2023.
  - For the family of **Glenn Weber**, who entered rest on April 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Jones** (Floyd Mast's uncle), who entered rest on April 11, 2023.
  - For the family of **Linda Wonder** (Sharon Mast's stepmother), who entered rest on April 27, 2023.
  - For the family of **John Herr** (Abby Eberly's friend), who entered rest on April 29, 2023.
  - For the family of **Sherry Stoltzfus** (Esther's sister-in-law's mother), who entered rest on May 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Jim Brubaker**, who entered rest on May 5, 2023.
  - For the family of **Clarence Bauman** (Joyce Good's brother), who entered rest on June 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **Geraldine Fauser** (Pastor Jonathan's friend's mother), who entered rest July 4, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ben Schweitzer** (Kim Sweigart's son-in-law's friend), who entered rest July 10, 2023.
  - For the family of **Mary Martin** (Abby Eberly's friend's sister), who entered rest on July 15, 2023.
  - For the family of **Ray Snader**, who entered rest on July 17, 2023.
  - For the family of **John Kendig** (Sharon Mast's brother-in-law), who entered rest on July 19, 2023.
    - May the Lord give immeasurable peace, strength, and comfort to all who face loss and grief.

## PRAYER GUIDE

- *We pray for all dementia sufferers* and for **their caretakers**, that God would lighten burdens, restore clarity to injured minds, and speak directly to hearts and souls with his comfort, his peace, and the light of grace.
- *We pray for all suffering from cancer* – (including Randy Vandill, Cindy Ebersole, Troy Frey, Lisa Mast, Lori Zimmerman, Pat Street [Nancy Mountz's sister], Betty Kennedy [Del Ream's niece-in-law], Adrienne Hedges [Brenna Pammer's friend], Donna and Brandy Rhodes [Cindy Ruth's sister-in-law and nephew], Earl Martin [Miriam Rissler's brother-in-law], Doris Snader, Erwin Sensenig Jr., Rev. Marlin Lafferty, Rev. Don Wert, etc.) – that God may shield them from pain, restore their bodies, comfort them, and bless their doctors.
- *We pray for the other assorted health concerns (and other needs) of:*
  - Delores, Ruth, Jeremiah, Bobby, and Luke Snader + Carol Briggs (Ruth's sister)
  - John Good (Earl's brother) + David Good + Dave Embry Jr. (Shirley Good's niece's husband)
  - Floyd Mast + Steven Mast (Floyd's son) + Cindy Bannon + Marilyn Wilson (Cindy's mother)
  - Delores Jaxel + Clair Kohl + Jeff Kohl + Henry Kohl + Shawn and Candace Sweigart
  - Earl and Pauline Good + Jen Swanson (Earl and Pauline's granddaughter)
  - Cherri Snader + Lawrence Groff + Jim Becker + Don Pickle + Dot Yohn
  - Mary Andrews + Raymond Bannon + Emma Shirk (Ken Bannon's aunt)
  - Debbie Diem (Sharon Mast's sister) + Tom Schwer (Sharon's stepbrother)
  - Barty Messner + Shannon Messner + Shirley Riggins (Deb Messner's mother)
  - Jerry Felpel and Doris Getz + Dawn Acevedo (Cindy Hoffer's sister) + Paul Ford
  - Josh Kendig (Sharon Mast's son) + Connie Dieter (Leon and Jean Hess's daughter)
  - Larsen Houck (Shirley Good's great-grandson) + Kayley Smith (the Hesses' granddaughter)
  - Abby Eberly + Linda Sweitzer (Abby's friend) + Lindsay Ringler (Abby's granddaughter)
  - Violet Stauffer + Floyd Heuyard + Dennis Wanner + Sharon Geib (Deb Kimmel's sister)
  - Kathryn Shirk (Jean Hess's aunt) + Sonya Shirey (Jean's friend)
  - Veanna Baxter + Julia Reed (Veanna's sister) + Shirley Buchanan
  - Ray Arment + Mary Skiba (Sally's cousin) + Emily Sensenig
  - Ken Styer + Lucy Weber + Bret Hoffert + Jethro Hursh
  - Jeremy Kurman + Warren Weinhold + Jody Freeman
  - Jess Pennepacker + Charles Yingst + Ralph Mountz
  - Carl and Grace Nolt + Vera Kochel + Carl Martin
  - Robert and Barbara Sparr + Rodger Whittaker
  - Elizabeth Zimmerman (John Eberly's sister)
  - Dorothy Long (Sharon Mast's boss's sister)
  - Savannah Walker + Ben + Minerva Hufford
  - Troy Frey and both of his parents + Tory Lingg
  - Ken Keen and Nancy Fox (Floyd Mast's friends)
  - Donna Sensenig + Larry Sensenig + Daryll Sensenig
  - Matthew Huntington (Brenna Pammer's brother-in-law)
  - Lorraine Burkholder (Shirley Good's daughter) + Linda Burkholder
  - Linda Talbot (Cindy Ruth's sister) + Albert Rhodes (Cindy's brother)
  - Rodney Rhodes (Cindy Ruth's cousin) + Cathy Bullock (Cindy's neighbor)
  - Rebecca Lucas (the Walkers' family friend) + Rebecca Horst + Dillon Dewire + Barb Kern
  - Linda Ebert (Barb's friend) + the Bowmans (Barb's cousins) + Danielle (Barb's grandson's girlfriend)
- *We pray for other neighbors, friends, and believers in need*, that God would heal, provide, and comfort.
- *We pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit* upon our church, our community, our county, our nation, the Evangelical Congregational Church, and the church universal. *We pray for the whole church to be filled with a spiritual zeal for worship, evangelism, and discipleship. May the fires of revival fall!*
- *We praise God for all the prayers we've seen him answer and for his everlasting faithfulness!*